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# **Women's experiences of Equine Assisted Psychotherapy**

*A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirement  
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## **Abstract**

Equine assisted psychotherapy has received little research attention within psychology. This research explores the way women experience this modality. Working alongside Renee, an EAP practitioner, from HorsePower Aotearoa and three of her clients I undertook a photovoice project. Renee participated in both the planning aspects and as a key participant, informing the research through her knowledge of EAP in practice. Drawing on photovoice techniques to gather data with hard to reach groups the information was gathered from participants' images and their photo elicitation interviews. This allowed the narratives of the women's experiences to be communicated on more than one level. The narratives demonstrated the processes of EAP in action as well as revealing some of the fundamental attributes that make this therapy efficacious. The analysis showed that the interrelationships between the therapist, the horses, the space, the place and the client create a complex ecology. What was evidenced was that for meaningful change to be made, the clients need to feel safe to make those changes. EAP seems to provide a space and place that enables this. The implications of this are the spreading awareness of EAP as an effective modality especially for clients with previous difficulties engaging with therapy.

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